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Protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[1] and Agenda 21,[2] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[3] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[4] the Mauritius Declaration[5] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[6] the United Nations Millennium Declaration[7] and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[8]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[5] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] See resolution 55/2.

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

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Reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[9] which provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

Recalling the Convention on Biological Diversity[10] as an important instrument in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity,

Recalling also biodiversity-related conventions and organizations, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[11] the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[12] the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,[13] the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region,[14]

Recognizing the role of national legislation in the context of the protection of coral reefs and related ecosystems within national jurisdictions,

Recalling its annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries, including resolution 61/105 of 8 December 2006, its resolution 64/73 of 7 December 2009 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, its resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009, in which it decided to organize the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, its resolution 63/214 of 19 December 2008, entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", its resolution 64/203 of 21 December 2009 on the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant resolutions,

Noting the Manado Ocean Declaration adopted by the World Ocean Conference on 14 May 2009 and the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity of 1995,[15]

Noting also the work of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on marine and coastal biodiversity, in particular on coral reefs and related ecosystems, and the outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Nagoya, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010, including in relation to the updating and revision of the strategic plan for the post-2010 period,[16]

Noting further the request of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, to the Executive Secretary of the Convention[17] to prepare, subject to the availability of financial resources, a report

[9] Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.
[10] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[11] Ibid., vol. 993, No. 14537.
[12] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.
[13] Ibid., vol. 1651, No. 28395.
[14] Available from www.unep.org.
[15] See A/51/312, annex II, decision II/10.
[16] See UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27.
[17] Ibid., annex, decision X/29, para. 74.

on the progress made in the implementation of the specific workplan on coral bleaching adopted by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VII/5,[18]

Recognizing that millions of the world's inhabitants depend on the health of coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development as they are a primary source of food and income, add to the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of communities and also provide for protection from storms, tsunamis and coastal erosion,

Expressing grave concern about the adverse impact of climate change and ocean acidification on the health and survival of coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world, including through sea-level rise, increase in the severity and incidence of coral bleaching, rising sea surface temperature and higher storm intensity, combined with the synergistic negative effects of waste run-off, overfishing, destructive fishing practices, alien invasive species and coral mining,

Noting with concern that coral reef degradation is likely to lead to the loss of significant economic and social benefits, in particular for States which are highly vulnerable to coral reef loss and have a low adaptive capacity,

Maintaining that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change, and calling upon States to take urgent global action to address climate change in accordance with the principles identified in the Convention, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities,

Acknowledging that, in many countries, indigenous and local communities have a distinctive relationship with marine and coastal environments, including coral reefs and related ecosystems, and in some cases ownership thereof, in accordance with national legislation, and that such peoples have an important role to play in the protection, management and preservation of those reefs and related ecosystems,

Acknowledging also the leadership role in tropical marine ecosystems management provided by the International Coral Reef Initiative, a partnership of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing that many threats to coral reefs are transboundary in nature and, in this regard, welcoming regional initiatives, including the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, the Micronesia Challenge, the Caribbean Challenge, the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, the Eastern Tropical Seascape Project, the West Indian Ocean Partnership, the West African Conservation Challenge and the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs in the Americas Region,

Welcoming the efforts of the agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system in the field of the protection of marine biodiversity and, in particular, coral reefs and related ecosystems,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development,[19] requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/150 of 20 December 2010,

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[18] See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/5, annex I, appendix 1.

[19] A/66/298.

Noting that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 4 to 6 June 2012, could serve as an opportunity to secure political commitment by formulating concrete measures and actions relating to oceans and coral reefs,

1. *Urges* States within their national jurisdictions and the competent international organizations within their respective mandates, given the imperative for action, to take practical steps at all levels to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development, including immediate and concerted global, regional and local action to respond to the challenges and to address the adverse impact of climate change, including through mitigation and adaptation, as well as of ocean acidification on coral reefs and related ecosystems;

2. *Also urges* States to formulate, adopt and implement integrated and comprehensive approaches for the management of coral reefs and related ecosystems under their jurisdiction, encourages regional cooperation in accordance with international law regarding the protection and enhancement of the resilience of coral reefs, and in that respect calls upon development partners to support such efforts in developing countries, including through the provision of financial resources, capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies and know-how on mutually agreed terms, as well as the exchange of relevant scientific, technical, socio-economic and legal information, to enable developing countries to take all necessary action for the protection of their coral reefs and related ecosystems, as appropriate;

3. *Further urges* States to identify marine and coastal management, including coral reef management, as an urgent sustainable development priority, and to ensure that economic and social development strategies prioritize effective coral reef management in order to address poverty eradication, food security, sustainable livelihoods and conservation;

4. *Notes* chapter 17 of Agenda 21, chapter IV of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and paragraph 53 of General Assembly resolution 57/141 of 12 December 2002 and, in particular, the commitment to the formation of representative, area-based marine management networks by 2012, and, in this regard, urges States to identify significant coral reefs and other related marine ecosystems and to implement and integrate area-based management tools into broader sustainable development strategies;

5. *Encourages* data collection and scientific research at all relevant levels on the economic, social and environmental benefits of coral reefs and related ecosystems, in order to develop and enhance measures to protect coral reefs, reinforce their resilience and strengthen the ability of coastal communities to adapt to environmental changes and coral reef degradation;

6. *Encourages* States to work constructively towards the identification, at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, of concrete measures to implement internationally agreed goals and commitments relating to the sustainable management of the marine environment, including the protection of coral reefs and related ecosystems and, in this regard, to consider the recommendations set forth in the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development.